

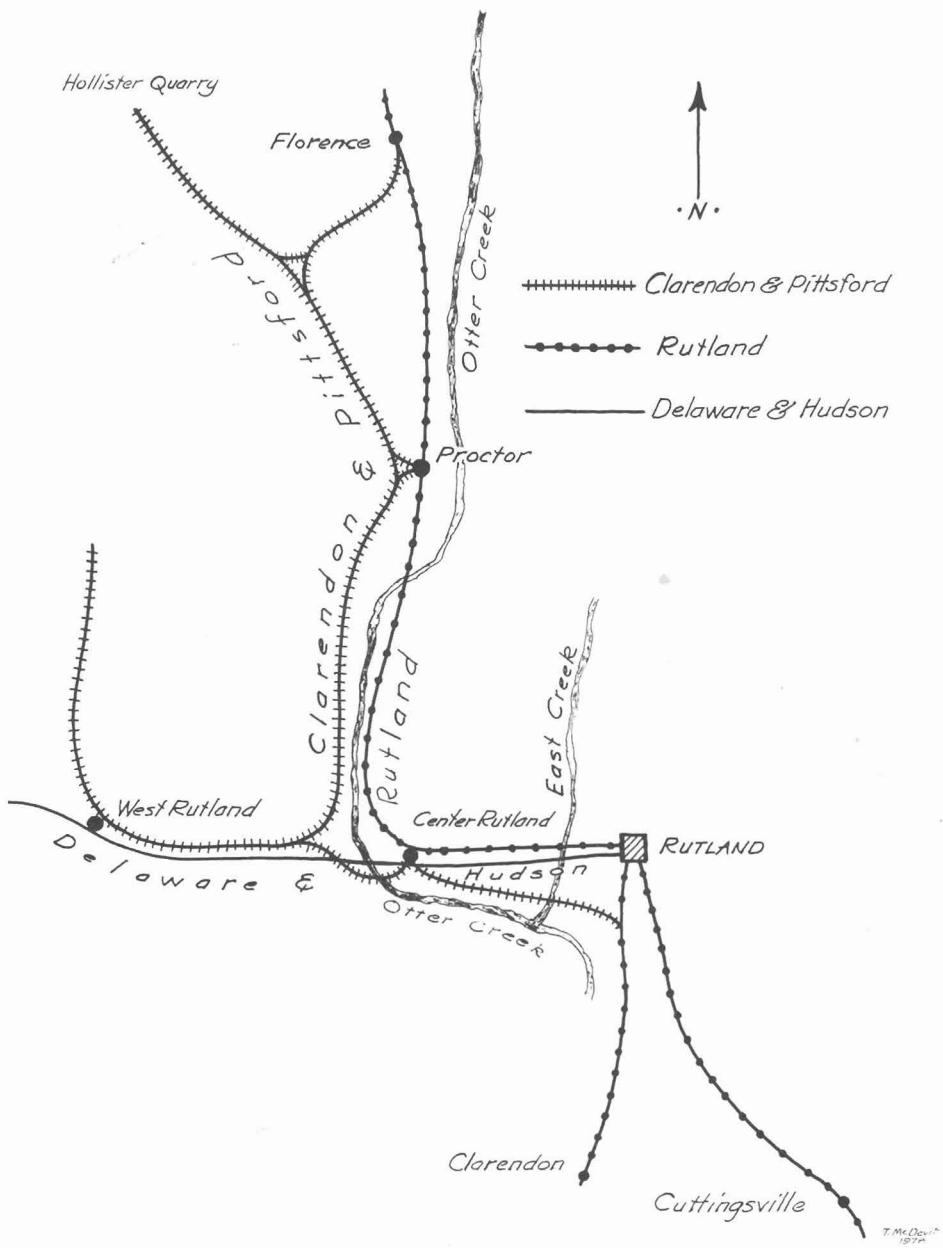
RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

VOLUME XI No. 3

SUMMER 1981

The CLARENDON & PITTSFORD RAILROAD





Redfield Proctor

The Honorable Redfield Proctor was one of the industrial giants of his day and the founding father of the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad.

The Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad

by Thomas B. McDevitt and Michael L. Austin

On September 10, 1885, the Vermont Marble Company officially incorporated and organized the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. Using a standard gauge line, the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad operated from Florence (at the north end) and Hollister Quarry White Pigment Corporation plant and Loveland Quarry to Proctor and Center Rutland, with a branch line operating to the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation generating plant in Rutland. Another line went from Center Rutland to West Rutland, making the total distance 15.70 miles. When the railroad was first designed, the main line, according to the Second Biennial Report of the Vermont Board of Railroad Commissioners, was ten miles long. From the Proctor quarries to Proctor was two and one half miles and from Proctor to Center Rutland and West Rutland was seven and one half miles with three miles of sidings.

In addition to the main line, however, there were eventually six and two tenths miles of switching track in the rail yards at Florence, Proctor, Center Rutland and West Rutland. In 1884 a survey was commissioned in order to extend the line from West Rutland through Center Rutland to connect with the Bennington and Rutland Railroad near the Fairgrounds in Rutland. The extension, only five miles long, was to break up the monopoly on marble and coal freight which the Delaware and Hudson Railroad skillfully controlled. The road was to have been known as the Rutland and Tidewater Railroad, but it never did materialize. Four years later, however, in 1888, the Vermont Marble Company did extend its line between Center Rutland and West Rutland and later continued the line to hook up with the Bennington and Rutland Railroad at the point designated in the Rutland and Tidewater survey.

This portion of the line paralleled Otter Creek until it reached St. Peter's Athletic Field, which it then skirted. It passed near Calvary Cemetery and crossed Meadow, Forest and Granger Streets before connecting with the Rutland and Bennington Railroad. This section was abandoned many years ago, with only a spur track surviving, which extends from what is now the Vermont Railway Bennington Division to Meadow, where it services an Exxon bulk plant operated by Walter Patch.

Without any doubt, the man most responsible for the organization and development of the Clarendon & Pittsford was Redfield Proctor, an industrial giant of his day. According to his biography in **Men of Vermont**, published in 1894, Redfield Proctor was born in Proctorsville, Vermont, June 1, 1831. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1851, and received his A.M. degree from the same school in 1854. He selected law as his profession and pursued preliminary studies at Albany Law School in New York. After graduation in 1859 he was admitted to the New York Bar and also at Woodstock, Vermont.

During a portion of the years 1860 and 1861 he practiced his profession in the office of his cousin, Judge Isaac Redfield, the eminent jurist, at Boston, Massachusetts.

Upon the outbreak of the rebellion in 1861, he immediately returned to Vermont and enlisted in the Third Vermont Regiment, was commissioned as lieutenant and quartermaster and went to the front. After several promotions he was advanced in October, 1862, to colonelcy of the Fifteenth Vermont Volunteers and took part in the decisive engagement at Gettysburg's Cemetery Ridge during part of the second day's struggle.

Returning from the war he established himself in Rutland, entering into law partnership with Wheelock G. Veazey. Thrown into the conduct of business matters in settling affairs of a concern of which he had been appointed receiver, Colonel Proctor found that it was more to his taste to do things than to talk about them. The attraction that business life has for a man of pronounced executive ability soon caused him to withdraw from the active practice of law, and in 1869 he became manager for the Sutherland Falls Marble Company. In 1880 the

Sutherland Falls and Rutland Marble Companies were consolidated under the name of the Vermont Marble Company, with, by then, Governor Proctor as its president. Under his management this company grew and became the largest concern of its kind in the world.

The Second Biennial Report of the Board of Railroad Commissioners for June 20, 1888, to June 30, 1890, had high praise for construction of the road. "It is a well-built road and in every way equipped for the heavy traffic required, which is mainly the marble of the great quarries it was made to reach." But ten years later, although the observation was still favorable, it was not as unequivocal as that of the Second Biennial Report. The Seventh Biennial Report of 1898-1900 said, "The railroad is generally good but needs additional ballast at some points . . . The road is in good condition generally for the purpose for which it was constructed and is now operated." It pointed out that cattle guards were not at all crossings.



Mr. Proctor passed away in Washington, D.C. on March 4, 1908. A special train bore his remains to Proctor for a funeral service on March 6, 1908.

The developmental period of the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad can be dated from 1886, when it officially came into existence, to 1917 or 1918, by which time it had acquired its first generation of locomotives. Number 1, the F. R. Patch, an o-4-2T Baldwin, was acquired in December, 1885. Later the same locomotive was renamed the Fletcher D. Proctor. It served the line from 1885 to 1917, when it was retired.

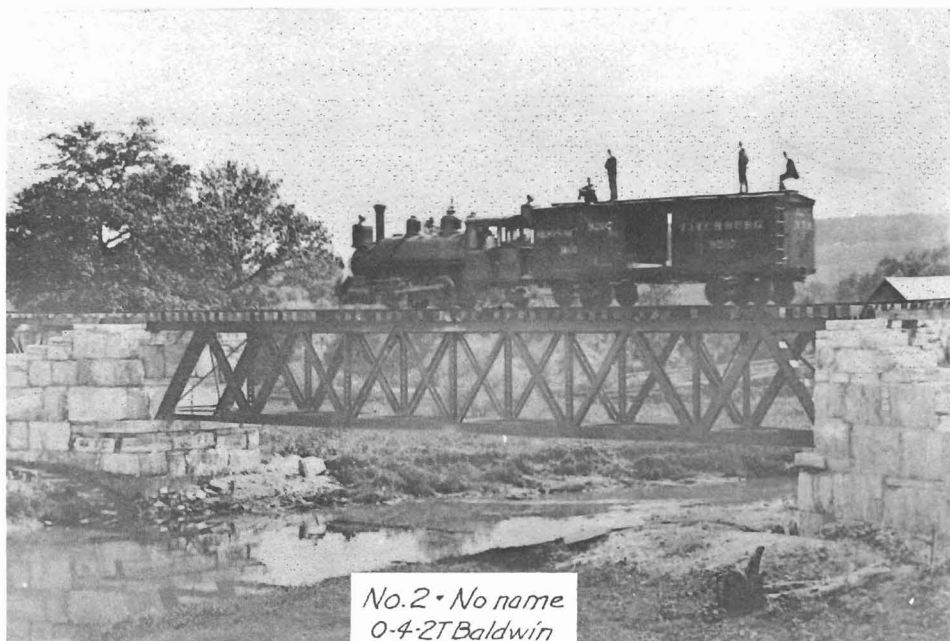
The picture shows Number 1, the F. R. Patch, hauling a string of loaded flatcars. The scene was on the curve between the Proctor machine shop and the terminal which served the line of sand buckets.



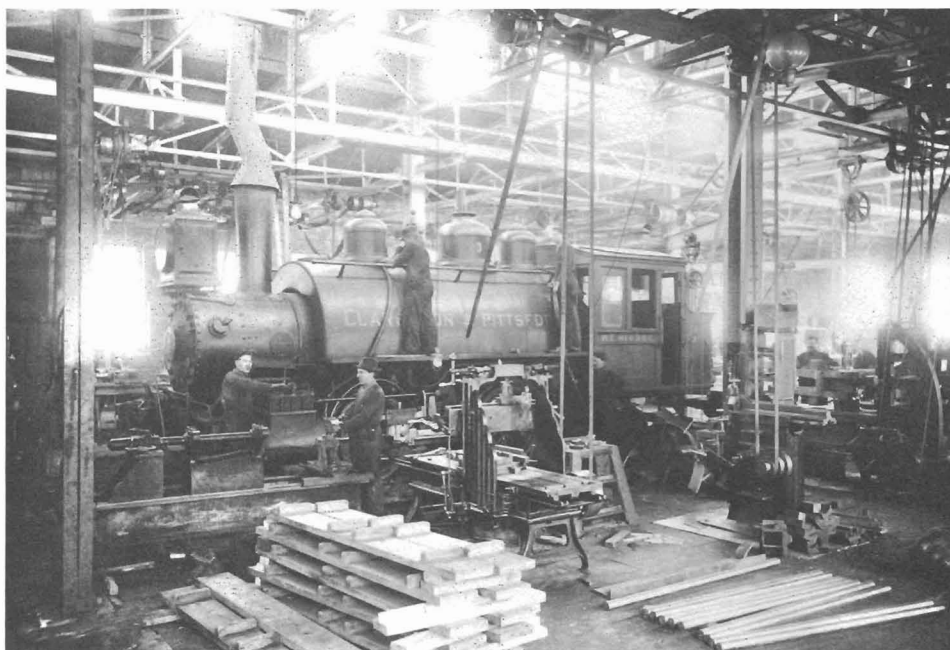
Number 1, the F. R. Patch, an 0-4-2T Baldwin was acquired December, 1885. It was later named the Fletcher D. Proctor and retired in 1917.

All of the Clarendon & Pittsford locomotives were named for directors of the Vermont Marble Company. Locomotive designations are interpreted in the following manner: The first of the three numerals indicates whether there is a "lead truck", or small wheels, on the front of the engine. The second numeral indicates the actual number of driving wheels moving the engine. The third numeral is again an indication as to whether there are any small wheels at the rear of the engine. Any small wheels at the front or rear of an engine are an indication of the size of the engine, and their sole function is to help guide a larger engine; they do no driving. A T following the third numeral means that the locomotive has a water tank under which those particular small wheels are located. Clarendon & Pittsford Number 1, therefore, was a fairly small engine with no lead truck, with four driving wheels and two small rear wheels under a water tank.

Eight months after Number 1 was acquired, Number 2 was acquired in August, 1887, and was in service for 20 years until it was retired in 1918. Number 2, an 0-4-2T Baldwin, had no name. There was a second Number 2, the E. R. Morse, a 2-6-0 Baldwin. It was originally built for the Brandon and West Rutland Railroad, but in 1912 the Brandon and West Rutland Railroad was liquidated, and the engine was sold to the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. Later, the engine was sold again, this time to the Choctaw Lumber Company and became their Number 10.



Number 2, an 0-4-2T Baldwin, had no name. It was acquired in August, 1887, and retired in 1918. The picture was taken on the bridge which spanned East Creek, just a few yards above where it empties into Otter Creek in Rutland. This was part of the Center Rutland to Rutland and Bennington line which was later abandoned.



Number 3, the W. E. Higbee, an 0-4-2T Baldwin is in for an overhaul at the Proctor machine shop.

Number 3, the W. E. Higbee, an 0-4-2T Baldwin, was acquired in December, 1890, five years after Number 1 had been acquired, and Number 3 served 33 years, finally being retired in 1923. Number 3 was one of the locomotives longest in use in the company's history.

Number 4, the George C. Robinson, an 0-4-0 Baldwin, was acquired in May, 1901. After 24 years with the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad, it was sold to the Boston and Maine Railroad in August, 1925, where it became their second Number 64 and was used on sharp curves at Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Number 5, the George H. Davis, a 2-6-0 Baldwin, was acquired in May, 1902. Later, it was changed to an 0-6-0 and was equipped with Economy Valve Chests and a superheater. After 28 years of service it was sold to the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad Company in Colorado and became its Number 2 engine. When the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad Company was abandoned in 1941, the locomotive was sold to the Morse Brothers Machinery Company of Denver, Colorado.

Number 6, an 0-6-0 Baldwin named the B. F. Taylor, was acquired in December, 1906. This engine was used as an 0-6-0 during much of its service on the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. It was rebuilt to an 2-6-0 with Economy Valve Chests and a superheater when it was sold to the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad in 1936, after 30 years of service with the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. After the demise of the Crystal River and San Juan, Number 6 also went to Morse Brothers in 1941.

Number 7, the C. I. Hunter, an 0-6-0 Baldwin, was acquired in February, 1912. The picture of Number 7 was apparently taken at delivery of the engine from the builders to the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad at Proctor. The protective covering can be seen on the pin attached to the main driver. Like Number 3, Number 7 served the Clarendon & Pittsford for 33 years and was finally retired in 1945.

Number 8, an 0-6-0 Lima, was built in March, 1918. It was an Ex-American International Shipbuilding Corporation's Number 1 (U.S. Emergency Fleet) and was purchased by the Clarendon & Pittsford from the Davis Equipment Company in April, 1922. For 23 years, Number 8 served the Clarendon & Pittsford line, and then in 1945 it was retired.

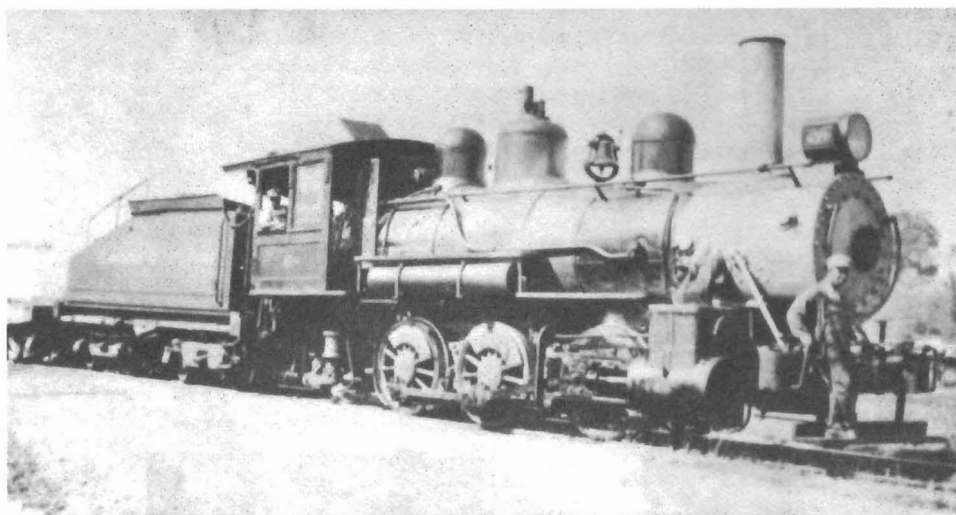
Number 9, an 0-6-0 Schenectady, was acquired in December, 1924, and worked the line for 22 years before being sold to the Rutland Railroad on March 29, 1946, for \$500. It became Rutland's Number 107 and eventually was retired by that railroad in September, 1953.



Number 4, the George C. Robinson, an 0-4-0 Baldwin was acquired in May, 1901, and sold to the Boston and Maine in 1925.



Number 5, the George H. Davis, was a 2-6-0 Baldwin acquired in 1902 and sold in 1930 to the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad of Colorado.



Number 6 an 0-6-0 Baldwin named B. F. Taylor, was acquired in December, 1906, and sold to the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad in 1936.



Number 7, the C. I. Hunter, an 0-6-0 Baldwin, was acquired in February, 1912, and retired in 1945.



Number 8, an 0-6-0 Lima, was built in March, 1918, and was purchased by the Clarendon & Pittsford from the Davis Equipment Company in April, 1922. It was retired in 1945.



Number 9, an an 0-6-0 Schenectady acquired in December, 1924, was sold to the Rutland Railroad on March 29, 1946, for \$500.



In 1945 the Clarendon & Pittsford bought its first diesel locomotives, Numbers 10 and 11.



Number 11.

The year 1945 became quite significant for the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. In that year the railroad disposed of its last steamer and acquired its first diesel locomotive. Locomotives Numbers 10 and 11 were diesel powered with 380 h.p. caterpillar engines built by Whitcomb. At that time it was reported that the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad was the first and only all diesel powered railroad in the country.

Twice, the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad came to the rescue of the Rutland Railroad: first, was the flood, and, second, was the Railroad strike. In 1927, following the disastrous flood, the Rutland Railroad was put out of business for several weeks because of the great flood damage suffered by this road in many places along its lines, but particularly in the Proctor area. The Clarendon & Pittsford track was above the flood waters of the Otter Creek and, consequently, was spared the ravages of the flood which inundated the much more low lying Rutland Railroad whose track closely paralleled the river. The Clarendon & Pittsford became a vital link during the stressful four week period when the Rutland was unable to operate and reconstruction was not yet completed.

The destructiveness of the flood near the river was such that the water moved everything in its path. During the 1927 flood the Gorham Bridge was lifted off its foundation and carried downstream. Later it was towed back and replaced on the original end-foundations. The ruggedness of this bridge was a fine testimonial to its builder.

Normally, Rutland's Number 88 transported milk to the New York and Boston markets. On November 3, 1927, it was transporting 22 cars — 21 cars of milk and one combination baggage and passenger car for the train's crew. Number 88 was highballing through Proctor, already running late, when Engineer Hank La Parle noticed the order board was up. La Parle was ordered to take the siding south of Proctor Station to permit northbound Number 65, the Green Mountain Flyer, to pass. La Parle proceeded on orders and took Number 88 to the siding and waited. The Otter Creek continued to rise and began to edge its way over the rails. After a two hour wait on the siding, the Creek had spilled over its banks and was roaring over the rails. Finally, an order was given to La Parle to back Number 88 into Proctor Yard instead of trying to get to Boston.

After proceeding only a few feet the train suddenly encountered a washout. Three of the cars started to sway violently. The crew could only helplessly watch as three cars slowly settled lower and lower in the water, as there was no grade left under the ties.

Further north at Florence, Rutland's Number 26, a 2-8-0 Schenectady built freighter, was doing some switching at the Clarendon & Pittsford interchange, four miles north of Proctor. It was ordered to Proctor to assist, if possible, the stalled Number 88. When Number 26 arrived at Proctor, its headlight picked out two of 88's train crew hanging desperately to the rear-end coach. The water was sloshing high up and threatened to invade the firebox. The couplings of No. 26 and the rear-end coach of No. 88 touched for a brief moment. The shivering trainmen scrambled onto No. 26's pilot and back over the running boards to safety. Number 26 reversed its engine and snorted out back to safer ground.

But others were still left on Number 88. The engineer and the fireman were still at the head of the 22 car train. With each passing minute the water continued to rise, and now the water had blocked their escape to Number 26. The men were obliged to climb higher and higher to escape the water pouring through. Finally, they were forced to the outside on to the top of the cab, where they remained for several hours watching the water and cut off from all help.

Several hours later another rescue party was formed to bring the men back to safety. The engineer and the fireman looked on as the party attempted its rescue. The current was so strong that it drove the rescue party back. La Parle and the fireman watched powerless to help the rescue workers and powerless to get off. All they could do was hope that current would slow down or the water would abate. It was out of their hands. They could do nothing. Powerful Number 88 was powerless and so also was everyone connected with it. There was nothing to do but wait and hope.

After midnight another rescue crew finally made it to the engineer and the fireman. They were taken off Number 88. The water had risen to within 18 inches of the top of the cab. If it had risen two more feet, the engineer and the fireman might have been washed away.

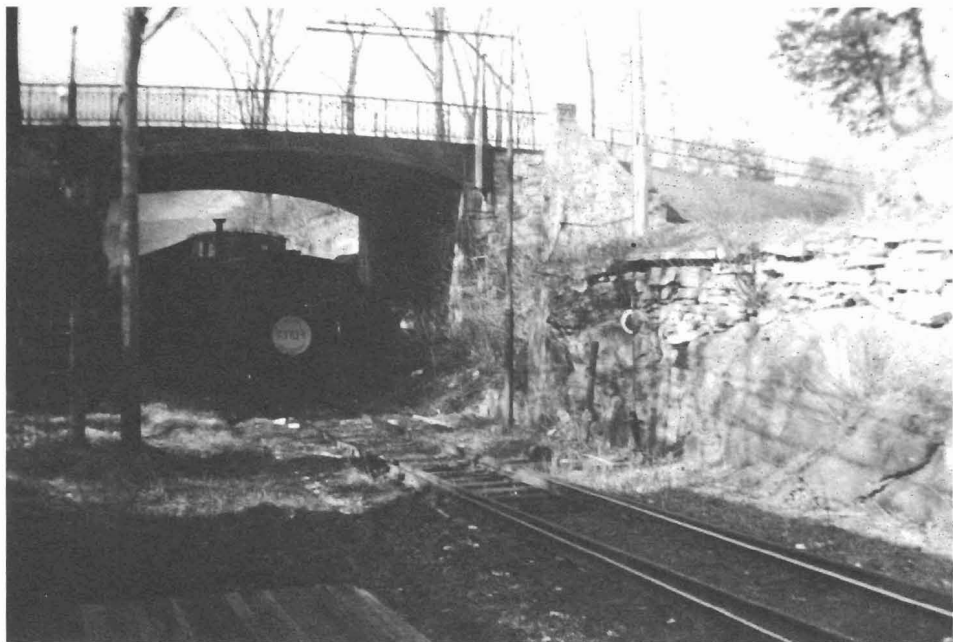


Water rose to the top of the Proctor Memorial bridge at the height of the flood of 1927.

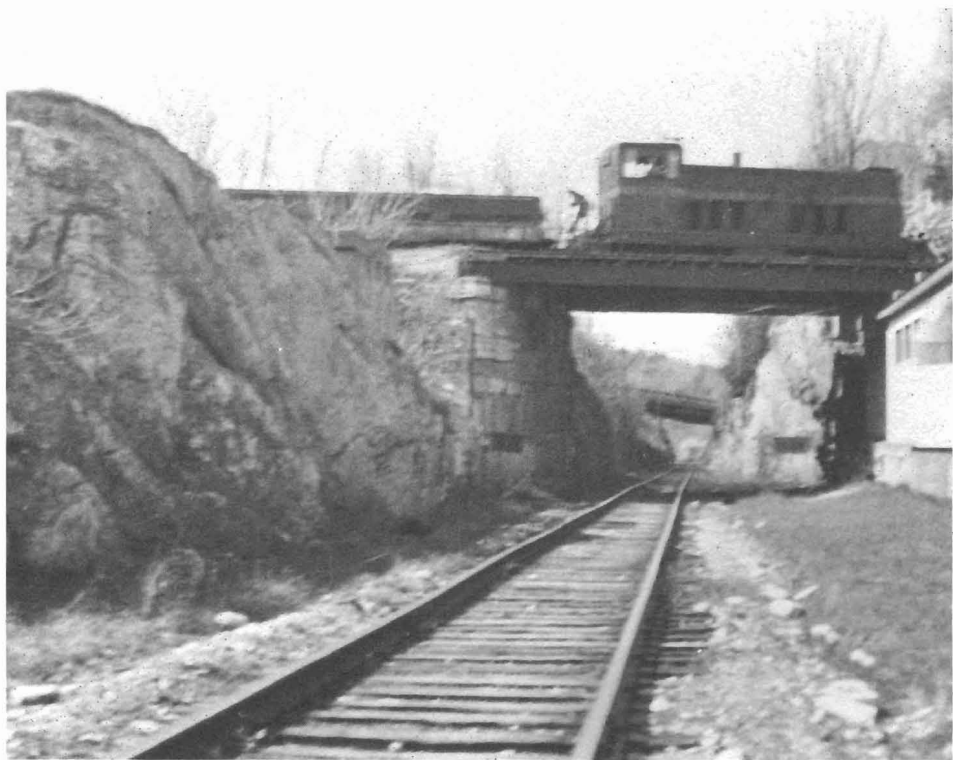


Train Number 88. The famous milk train which was caught in the flood. The water that shows in each picture is flood water and not the river which was on the train's far side in each instance.





The overpasses through which the water roared, washing away the roadbed and taking with it everything that would move.





This rocky cut is evidence of the blood, sweat and tears that went into building a railroad. This was the rock ledge north of Sutherland Falls and the worst cut on the new Rutland and Burlington Railroad which was opened in 1849. How was it accomplished? Not by steam or compressed air, only by brawn.



At the top, Proctor Station in more tranquil times — probably 1907 or 1908. In the background, at right, can be seen the old bandstand, and beyond that the old stone schoolhouse, of which construction began in 1866. It was razed in 1914. The railroad station was also razed, but that was in December, 1965. The lower picture, taken after the flood, shows clearly that several feet of the yard which surrounded the station were washed away.





In the upper right corner, railroad track can be seen hanging in space. In this instance, 225 feet of track were left hanging in space after the flood waters had subsided.

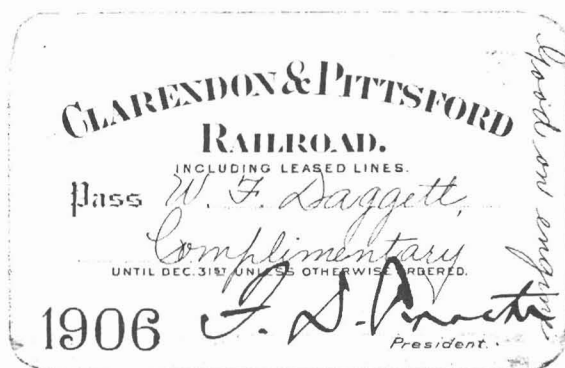
The second major time that the Clarendon & Pittsford railroad came to the aid of the Rutland Railroad was in 1961. Beginning on September 25 of that year, the Rutland Railroad was on strike. In August, 1962, the Clarendon & Pittsford purchased Number 500, built by General Electric in 1951, from the Rutland Railroad, and also essential spare parts for \$43,000. The purchase was necessary to keep up with the enormous amount of extra freight cars handled because of the Rutland strike.

The Clarendon & Pittsford stepped into the breach to help area shippers as much as possible. The Railroad's small scale operation was literally snowed-under with business. Since the railroad strike started, Center Rutland, which was the rail interchange with the Delaware and Hudson, was a very busy freight terminal. Many of the shippers who normally used the Rutland came to the Clarendon & Pittsford team track in Center Rutland to load or unload materials. Although the Delaware and Hudson served some customers in Rutland, the Clarendon & Pittsford's little yard was always crammed with cars, and materials were being handled by trucks to and from city plants.

Middlebury College was one of the many Rutland Railroad customers inconvenienced by the strike. Upwards of 90 cars of coal per year were used by the college for heat. During the strike the coal was interchanged from the Delaware and Hudson to the Clarendon & Pittsford at Center Rutland and hauled to Florence where the coal was stored in a ten acre lot leased by the college and then trucked to Middlebury as needed. This delivery alone presented quite a chore for the three cars at a time to operate over the hill from Proctor.

The Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad did not carry United States mail, nor did it have regular passenger service. It carried its own employees to and from their places of work at Florence, West Rutland and Proctor until 1925 when the service was phased out due to the ever increasing numbers of employees who drove their own cars. It, nevertheless, was a remarkable railroad rich in history. The Clarendon & Pittsford lives on, not as a railroad unto itself, but now as a Division of the Vermont Railway. And today many people such as Bert Nelson continue the tradi-

tion. Bert is the son of long-time Clarendon & Pittsford engineer, Henry Nelson, and nephew of Clarendon & Pittsford conductor, Sigur Nelson. Bert is presently an engineer for the Vermont Railway Clarendon & Pittsford Division and has in his own right more than 33 years with the Clarendon & Pittsford.



Bibliography

Carlson, Harold. letter to Bernard Bjork re Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad. Springfield, Mass.: December 12, 1965, 2 pp.

Gale, David C. *Proctor. The Story of a Marble Town.* Brattleboro, Vt.: The Vermont Printing Company, 1922.

Jaffe, Harry. "From Florence's Yards to Florence's Hills It's Riding the Rails Through Otter Valley On The Ol' C&P". *The Sunday Rutland Herald and The Sunday Times Argus.* Barre, Vt.: Times Argus Association Inc., June 6, 1976, Sec. 3, p.4.

Kyper, Frank. "Tiny Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad Finds Itself Bustling Since Strike on Rutland". *Rutland Daily Herald,* Rutland, Vt.: Herald Assn., Inc. (1961?)

(McDevitt, Thomas B.) "Clarendon & Pittsford Rail Road (sic)". N.p., 7-10-78, 2 pp.

Olson, Edward W. "The Clarendon and Pittsford Railroad Company". *Vermont Marble Company Chips* Vol. XXVII, No. 9. Proctor, Vt. November, 1964, pp.3-5.

Partridge, Frank C. *Vermont Marble Company. Its Past and Future.* Proctor, Vt.: Vermont Marble Company, January 1, 1921.

Pittsford. Now and Then. Pittsford, Vt.: Pittsford Historical Society, October, 1980.

Shaughnessy, Jim. *The Rutland Road.* Berkeley, Cal.: Howell - North Books, 1964.

Shaughnessy, Jim. "White Rock and Green Hills. A Profile of Vermont's Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad". *The Railroad Enthusiast.* Volume 7, Number 1. Quincy, Mass. Winter and Spring 1970, pp. 3-10.

Ullery, Jacob G. *Men of Vermont: An Illustrated Biographical History of Vermonters and Sons of Vermont.* Brattleboro, Vt.: Transcript Publishing Company, 1894, pp. 327-329.

The following letter is from the files of the Rutland Historical Society:

65 Grand Street
Springfield, Massachusetts
December 12, 1965

Mr. Bernard Bjork
25 Williams Street
Proctor, Vermont

Dear Mr. Bjork:

Received your letter concerning information about the C&P Railroad. I am afraid I can't help very much. My father was an engineer from 1901 until he died in 1921. I was born in 1908, so my memory of the C&P covers approximately from 1914 until we left Proctor in 1921.

You mention the accident at the machine shop in which Mr. Eakman was killed. Two of my sisters, Esther and Celia, were passing by the machine shop at the time. They didn't know if my father was in the cab of that engine, so ran all the way home. That engineer was an uncle of Edith (Erickson) Nelson.

I have been on a number of rail fan trips in the past 20 years, but on the trip to Proctor last September was the first time I carried a camera. And that was because I wanted pictures of the C&P engine house.

I enjoy talking to members of the crew on the trips. The engineer in September was Oliver Steele. One of the brakemen's names was Hanson. Of course, they knew Frank Garrow, who started his railroad career firing for my father. Also they knew Robert Rounds, engineer on the Rutland, whom I helped peddle milk in Proctor. Oliver said a C&P brakeman often got on the engine at Center Rutland to talk. He couldn't think of his name. I said I bet it was Sigur Nelson. Oliver said that's the man. Steele and Hanson work the Rutland-Bennington run every day.

I bought a book called "The Rutland Road" by Jim Shaughnessy of Troy, N.Y. It costs \$10 but worth every cent. You may have the book, but if you haven't, you should get it. He has a picture of a C&P train with the Rutland diesel going by the house I was born in. Isn't that a coincidence? Also, there are pictures of the 1927 flood in Proctor. The milk train is on the siding with the cars and engine tipping in all directions.

The C&P did run special trains on Sunday. I remember the Catholic society hired the train to take them to West Rutland where they took trolley cars to Lake Bomoseen. My father was the engineer. I wanted to go, so he said ask George Howe for a pass. Howe said it was OK. I had to go to Sunday School, but got out a little early. I went down near the station where my father had No. 7 and two coaches. We started at noon and stopped at McGarry's Crossing and Double Road Crossing. The rest of the crew went to a ball game in Rutland. But my father and I watched the engine. At 8 p.m. we had the kerosene headlight lit, steam up ready when the trolleys arrived. I stood in front of my father on the way home blowing the whistle for the crossings and putting on the water injector whenever he told me to.

Eddie Olson, president of the C&P, had a picture and story in the Marble Chips about the C&P. The picture of the seven engines was taken in 1914. I remember when some of the engines came back to Proctor still coupled together. All the engines except No. 2 had names: 1, John Patch; 2, none; 3, W. Higbee; 4, George Robinson; 5, George Davis; 6, B. F. Taylor; and 7, C. I. Hunter.

I would like to see your collection of pictures some time when I'm in Proctor. Sorry I can't be helpful on dates, etc.

Sincerely yours,
Harold Carlson

**RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 CENTER STREET, RUTLAND, VERMONT
(802) 775-2006**

The society publishes the *Quarterly* for its members with the aim of preserving and studying the history of the Rutland community, which is comprised of the Towns of Rutland, Proctor and West Rutland and the City of Rutland. The Society maintains and operates a museum at 101 Center Street, Rutland, in the former Bank of Rutland building (built in 1825), now owned by the City of Rutland and leased to the Society at no charge.

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of dues to the;

Membership Secretary—**Hope E. Hubbard**, 248 Lincoln Avenue, Rutland, VT 05701

Dues are \$3.00 per year for regular members; for those wishing to give the Society further support, a contributing membership is \$10.00; a business membership is \$25.00; a sustaining membership is \$100.00; and a life membership (one payment only) is \$75.00.

All members receive as part of their membership four issues of the *Quarterly*. The expiration date of each membership is listed on the mailing label of the publication. Members wishing to pay two or more years' dues in advance are encouraged to do so to reduce costs.

Manuscripts are invited; address correspondence to the Editor.

Gifts or bequests of money or articles of local historical interest are welcome at all times and are deductible for income tax purposes.

*Editor: **Michael L. Austin**
Managing Editor: **Jean C. Ross***

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 Center Street
Rutland, Vermont 05701

| |
|--|
| NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U. S. POSTAGE PAID Rutland, Vermont Permit No. 12 |
|--|

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED.

The number or letter on the address label indicates your dues status:
80 one year in arrears 81 current L life membership